

# Parenting Views

## Children Are Like Kites

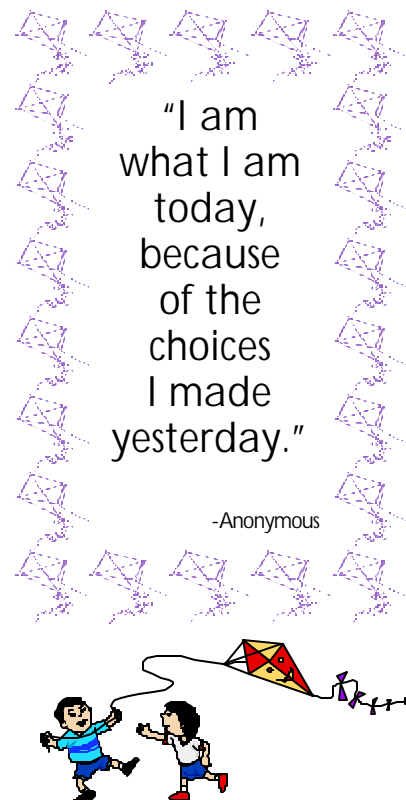


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I see children as kites...you spend a lifetime trying to get them off the ground... You run with them until you are both breathless... They crash... you add a longer tail... They hit the rooftop...you pluck them out of the spout. You patch and comfort and teach. You watch them lifted by the wind and assure them that someday they'll fly...Finally they are airborne, but they need more string and you keep letting it out and with each twist of the ball of twine, there is a sadness that goes with the joy because the kite becomes more distant and some how you know that it won't be long before the beautiful creature will snap the lifeline that bound you together and soar as it was meant to soar...free and alone... Only then do you know you did your job

"I am what I am today, because of the choices I made yesterday."

-Anonymous



Source: Jane Nelsen, Ed.D., Lynn Lott, M.A., M.F.C.C. & Mary L. Hughes for Family Information Services.

## WAYS TO AVOID SAYING "NO" OR HOW TO GET COOPERATION

### Clear expectations:

- "You may switch shirts as soon as you have finished eating breakfast"
- "When your toys are up on the shelf, then you may play outside."

### Respond with a question:

- "What is it you don't like about this shirt?"
- "When is our outside time?"
- "Would you like to do this yourself, or do you want (need) my help?"

### State a given (i.e., a rule or condition):

- "That is the shirt you chose to wear."
- "This is inside time."
- Avoid defending or explaining, simply continue to restate the rule.

### Check out a child's knowledge or understanding:

- "What needs to happen before we leave this morning?"
- "What needs to happen before we go outside?"
- If the child claims, "I don't know," ask, "Would you like help remembering?"

### Invite Cooperation:

- "I need your help. Can you figure out what would be the most helpful thing you could do right now?"

### Limited choices:

- "You may change your shirt now or after breakfast."
- "Do you want to paint or play with the blocks?"

### Negotiate an agreement:

- "Would you like to change shirts before or after you clean your room?"
- Restate the agreement: "After changing shirts you agree to go in and clean your room."
- "When it is time to go outside, would you like to be in the first group to go out or in the last group?"

### Follow through:

- Once an agreement has been reached, honor it by following through. When the shirt is changed return to the child and say, "Room cleaning time." Do not argue, simply continue to repeat one main word, such as, "room," or "clean."

### Say what it is that you want:

- "I want breakfast eaten before you change your clothes."
- "I want you to be here with me and the rest of the family."

### Pick your battles, and just say yes:

- "Yes, it is fine to change shirts right now."
- "Yes, you can go outside if Daddy can go with you."

### Say "yes" to the feelings and "no" to the action:

- "I wish we could go outside right now too. We had such a good time walking Cleo this afternoon, didn't we?"

Source: Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott, Mary Hughes for Family Information services

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Source: Family Information Services, Minneapolis, MN  
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## GROW-IT-AGAIN GARDENING: Taking it from the top

Many plant and root tops we usually throw away can grow into interesting plants. Try beets, carrots, turnips, yams or pineapples. Organic produce works best because it hasn't been treated to prevent sprouting. Tops that already have buds or tiny leaves will produce a plant sooner.



Place the tops in water immediately after cutting. Leave 1/2 inch of carrot, beets, or turnips, 3/4 inch of pineapple, or 2 inches of yam (use the round end). You can plant one container with several tops all the same or a variety. Use any container. For example, flower pots or waxed cardboard milk containers. Pineapples and yams need deeper containers than carrots or beets. Use 3/4 fill of stone or gravel. Place your tops cut side down on top of the stones, and fill with enough water to keep the cut sides wet.

Place in a sunny window. Check daily to see that there is enough water to keep the cut tops wet. Don't worry about green algae growing on the stones. Leaves attached to the cut top at the time of planting may die back before new leaves replace them. Once you have a sizeable plant with new leaves and roots, transplant it in a deeper container with potting soil. If your cut top doesn't sprout within two weeks, start over with another one.

Source: Compiled by Anne Crotser, 4-H/MSUE, Macomb County

## YOUTH GARDENING WEBSITES

AUDUBON SOCIETY [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org) homepage lets you select kids, education.

BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS [www.bhg.com/kids](http://www.bhg.com/kids)

DOLE COMPANY [www.dole5aday.com](http://www.dole5aday.com) choose from nutrition fruits + vegetables (nutrition, history, animated plants, how to grow, select, store, prepare), for kids and educators.

GARDENS FOR GROWING PEOPLE [www.svn.net/growpepl](http://www.svn.net/growpepl) ideas and equipment for gardening with children.

JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM <http://junormastergardener.tamu.edu> or <http://jmgkids.com> Texas A+M program home page, with links to state partners (including Michigan) great links from this site to lots of "cool kid sites".

LET'S GET GROWING [www.letsgetgrowing.com](http://www.letsgetgrowing.com) provides ideas and equipment for gardening with children.

### MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

[www.hrt.msu.edu](http://www.hrt.msu.edu) click on gardens. Link to Butterfly House, Lewis Landscape Arboretum, Hidden Lake, Horticultural Demonstration Gardens, 4-H Children's Garden, MSU Bug House or Beal Botanical Garden.

[www.4hgarden.msu.edu](http://www.4hgarden.msu.edu) 4-H Children's Garden Homepage. Leads to selections for parents, teachers and kids. Order materials, see calendar of events, take a virtual tour of a garden and view a list of frequently asked questions.

[www.msue.msu.edu](http://www.msue.msu.edu) MSU Extension Homepage. Go to Education Programs, then to Youth Development.

[www.msue.edu/msue/cyf/youth](http://www.msue.edu/msue/cyf/youth) Michigan 4-H Homepage. Select 4-H curriculum materials, 4-H Training and Events, State and National 4-H Links.

NATIONAL GARDEN ASSOCIATION [www.kidsgardening.com](http://www.kidsgardening.com) Menu options: Parents' Primer, Classroom Stories, School Greenhouse. Also browse sites by categories that include: Assessment, Botany, Building Community Support, Ecosystems, Fundraising. Garden Planning, Gardening and the Arts, Greenhouses, Hydroponics, Indoor Gardening, Language + Literature Connections, Multicultural and Historic Gardening, Nutrition, and School Gardening Research.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION [www.nwf.org/kids](http://www.nwf.org/kids) Ranger Rick's Kids Zone home page pick from games, outdoor activities, reader's corner and cool tours.

Source: Compiled by Anne Crotser, 4-H/MSUE Macomb County

